

*Looking Backward*

NORTH DAKOTA  
OUTDOORS

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Marks Its **70<sup>th</sup>** Birthday

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## By Harold Umber

North Dakota *OUTDOORS* marks its 70th year of publication in 2001. It was established as part of a legislative reorganization that transferred authority for game and fish matters from the five-member Game and Fish Board of Control to a Game and Fish Department with one chief administrator called the Game and Fish Commissioner.

The North Dakota State Legislature approved the office of Game and Fish Commissioner during the legislative session in 1929. The decision was approved by referendum in the June primary election the following year. In 1931, the state legislature created the Game and Fish Department.

Burnie Maurek took office as the Department's first commissioner in July 1930. In August 1931, the new commissioner launched *North Dakota OUTDOORS* as a mimeographed six-page bulletin dealing with "...items of conservation news as may be of interest to sportsmen and lovers of wildlife over the state."

The mission of *OUTDOORS* to provide conservation information has not changed substantially over the years, but the magazine has undergone an evolution not unlike the agency it represents. During the 70 years since the first issue of *OUTDOORS* was published, the state and nation have been faced with many conservation and environmental challenges on both a large and small scale.

In 1931, the plight of migratory waterfowl was of great concern, particularly ducks in the prime breeding areas of North Dakota and western Canada. Area game commissioners recommended a 30-day season throughout the United States and Canada, as opposed to the 90-day season under existing regulations. A bag limit of 10 ducks a day and 20 in possession was called for, as well as prohibition of shooting over baited grounds. This was a response to drought conditions that had significantly reduced the duck hatch. The drought and associated loss of habitat galvanized efforts that led to the establishment of national wildlife refuges and the creation of the duck stamp program to generate funds for wetland habitat preservation and restoration.

In 2001, the long-term needs of migratory waterfowl are still a concern. In the July issue of this magazine, Craig Bihle wrote of the challenges and accomplishments of the 15-year-old North American Waterfowl Management Plan. The North American Plan was also a response to severe drought, loss of habitat and declining duck populations in the mid-1980s and early '90s.

Some challenges became political issues with international implications that broadened local debate into national arguments measured in decades. Missouri River Diversion is a good example. The project to move Missouri River water eastward that was viewed with so much promise in the 1930s and '40s was challenged locally, nationally, and internationally as it began to take shape in the 1960s. Much of the debate concerned the effects of such a large scale project on the state's wildlife resources and focused on the loss of thousands of acres of wildlife habitat to reservoirs, drainage and canal building.

*North Dakota OUTDOORS* relates stories of wildlife conservation and recreation through a span of time that has seen a broadening of the agency's mission to include constituencies and special interests not imagined in earlier days.

What follows is a glimpse at some of the physical changes on the face of *North Dakota OUTDOORS* over time, along with a chronology to give the reader a general idea of some of the subjects treated over its 70-year history.



The first issue of *North Dakota OUTDOORS* published in August, 1931.



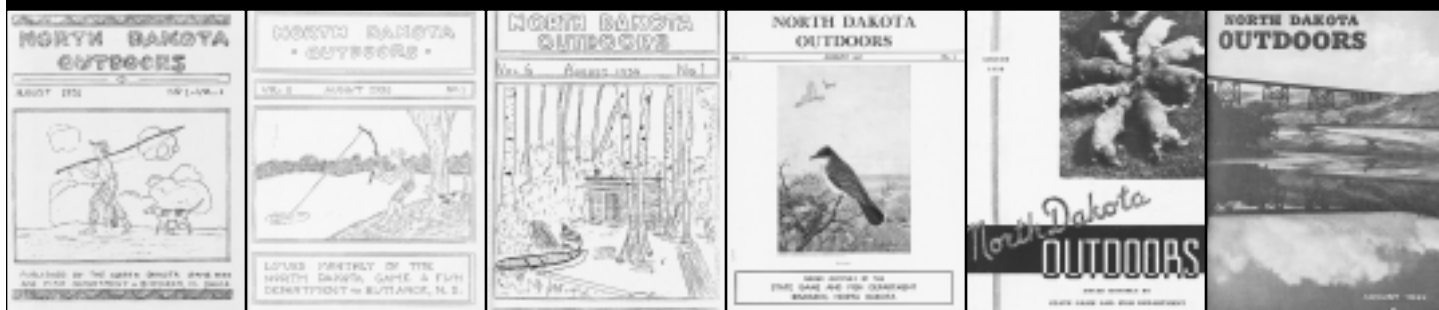
The first full-color issue of *North Dakota OUTDOORS* – September/October 1984.



The first calendar issue, December 1984, and the first black and white Annual Report issue, January 1985.



# 1931 to 1940



## 1931

Drought and waterfowl crisis

Pros/cons of pheasant distribution

First pheasant hunting season

First deer hunting season since 1922

Fifty-seven cents of each \$1.50 license fee to propagation

## 1932

Approximately 15,000 pheasants trapped in southeast released throughout the state

Fee for resident fishing license \$1.00

Department wages war on crows

Restoration of Rice Lake in Burleigh County to cost \$50 - \$60

Botulism kills ducks in Long Lake

## 1933

Snowy owl removed from list of protected birds

No trespass bill defeated

Lead poisoning in waterfowl, search for non-toxic shot underway

"...in early days, steamboats plying Devils Lake docked at edge of Minnewaukan, and the lake abounded with fish life, huge Great Northern Pike and other native Dakota fish being easily taken from the Minnewaukan docks."

Feeding game birds called a duty with dividends

## 1934

The Department recognizes dam building and Missouri River diversion as source of water for struggling waterfowl: "It is the duty of every man and woman in North Dakota, and of every school in the state, to get squarely behind the Missouri River Diversion Plan and never allow ourselves to give one inch of slack in the strenuous up-hill pull to put the plan over. This plan MUST BE put over, friends, or we will soon be writing a chapter on 'Our Assassinated Waterfowl'."

Predators targeted. Cartridge company offers special price of \$8.80 per case of shells to be used in exterminating predatory birds and animals

Depletion of waterfowl result of exploitation of sub-marginal lands and wetland drainage

Items responsible for loss of game, included lack of control on "vermin" and better transportation, "a Ford will take you anywhere there is game."

First duck stamp issued

## 1935

Habitat restoration work for migratory waterfowl in Prairie Pothole Region underway in spite of drought conditions

A Richland County man counted 7,878 feathers on a hen pheasant in six hours

Three-shell limit for auto-loading and repeating shotguns approved to reduce the killing capacity of waterfowl hunters

War on crows continues: "Wanted - One live crow - in North Dakota - the others, dead."

First Annual Convention of Junior Game Wardens' League of North Dakota held in Bismarck

## 1936

Drought continues, but waterfowl nesting conditions improved over 1935

Water conservation efforts tied to continued support of Missouri River Diversion Project

Recipes for crow broth, crow sandwich spread, and crow stew

Junior game wardens encouraged to establish Bird Havens

## 1937

Concern expressed about spring shooting of waterfowl

Department offers to supply each county in state with North Dakota grown trees

People encouraged to build crow traps

Audubon Society provides color covers for *North Dakota OUTDOORS*

Commissioner calls for respect of no hunting signs

## 1938

Conditions improved for waterfowl and upland game

Stories on identification and value of birds

*OUTDOORS* switches to smaller, printed format

Commissioner urges adults to take kids fishing

Sportsmen urged to shoot game with camera

## 1939

Domestic cats considered worst predator on birds

Department urges farmers to curtail burning activities on fields and fence lines

Effects of stream pollution on fish

Pittman-Robertson Act to be implemented, enabling legislation passes state legislature

Conditions for waterfowl and upland birds continue to improve

## 1940

Early Pittman-Robertson Act projects broaden scope of Department activities

Chukar partridge stocking

White-tailed deer plentiful in Sheyenne River Valley

Department has 11 district wardens

First state-wide survey of big game during winter of 1940-41

# 1941 to 1950



## Sportsmen Continue Blitzkrieg on Crows

Department Sponsored  
Contest Closes June 15;  
Many Clubs Participating

The habitat for North Dakota crows will continue being unsafe as long as the annual crow contest continues. In many localities the crow population seems to be considerably larger this spring than it has been for several years.

The crow offers sportsmen plenty of sport and a good way to shoot them is to obtain a stuffed owl, hide it among the branches of a tree in the vicinity of a gang of crows. They will raise a bedlam when they first see it, scolding, diving, and flapping at it in their wild attempt to remove it from the scene.



## 1942

Feathers and goose and duck down needed in war effort

Trappers urged to save furs for war effort

Post-war water projects proposed by State Water Commission

Twenty-five elk released in Killdeer Mountains

Biggest duck migration in 15 years expected, estimated population 97,000,000

## 1943

Buy War Bonds

Game birds plentiful but shotgun shells in short supply because of war effort

Gasoline rationing and tire shortage will restrict hunter travel to shorter distances

Deer hides and fat for war effort

Buckskin needed for Air Force garments

North Dakota anglers staying home to fish due to gas and tire rationing

## 1944

Pollution

Department dispenses with free tree program

First aerial survey of big game completed

Hungarian partridge harvest is 390,000

Early principles of game management

## 1944

1943 pheasant season extended in six southeast counties until January 22, 1944. Hunters can take seven cocks a day and use their 1943 license. Season opened in five western counties during month of February 1944 under the same rules.

North Dakota Wildlife Federation backs Missouri River development program  
State stream produces brook trout

Federal Aid Division investigates refuge possibilities of lignite mine spoil banks

Educational movies available from Department

## 1945

Shotgun shell production for civilian use terminated unless Germans defeated

North Dakota 19th in duck stamp sales

Survey to determine possible effects of Missouri Basin development upon wildlife

Spring snow goose migration largest in years

Crow stamps to provide money for crow bounty fund

## 1946

Airplane used for upland game survey for first time

Warning on use of DDT

Shortage of lead and brass will result in supply being far short of demand for shotgun shooters

Conservation farming holds hope for average North Dakota sportsman

Food habits of game animals to be studied

## 1947

Stream pollution control

The need for conservation education in schools

Conservation education depends on teacher training

Fish growth rates

Whooping cranes seen near Washburn

## 1948

Garrison Dam and Bald Hill Dam under construction

Bowhunters at Arrowwood stalk whitetails

Pheasants killed by blizzard

Wildlife and conservation farming

Fishing opportunities in North Dakota

## 1949

OUTDOORS photo contest

Who owns the wildlife?

Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park

Half-day hunting for upland game

Shrubs of North Dakota

## 1950

Badlands ranchers help census deer

Activities funded by license dollars

Spring floods

Department policy on winter feeding of game species

Federal aid for fishing becomes reality with passage of Dingell Bill

# 1951 to 1960



1951

Proposed legislation, 1951

Use of northern pike in fisheries management.

Walleyes in North Dakota

Handguns for sportsmen

Mobile wildlife display

1952

Reclamation projects and wildlife

Ice fishing derby

Wild turkey experiment

Insecticides and fish life

Garrison Dam and wildlife values

1953

Fox drives

Rabies study

Wildlife photography

Gabrielson Report on North Dakota Game and Fish Department

Chukar partridge released in Bullion Butte area

1954

Antelope stocked in Prophet's Mountain-Dogden Butte area

Hay harvest and the flushing bar

Early restoration efforts with giant Canada geese

Fall burning practices disastrous to wildlife

North Dakota conducts first archery hunting season for deer

1955

Big game and fisheries summarize 10-year plans

Seven years of progress in North Dakota game management

Waterfowl work through the seasons

Mechanical drawing selects antelope permits

Wildlife diseases

1956

Effects of Garrison Dam Diversion Unit on fish and wildlife

Mule deer survey combines aerial count and ground work on horseback

Half-day shooting area for geese established

Fish stocking

Bighorns return to North Dakota badlands

1957

Trees and shrubs for wildlife plantings

Fish tagging

Federal fish hatchery proposed at Garrison Dam

Rabies in North Dakota wildlife

Tips on accessing posted land

1958

Game management areas and easement refuges in North Dakota

Lab work in fisheries

Boating on Garrison Reservoir

Bag limits restricted for canvasbacks and redheads

Wild turkeys in North Dakota

1959

Department moves from state capitol to Fort Lincoln

Report on bounty system

Mink live-trapped for study

Field care of big game

Effect of Garrison Reservoir on Missouri River deer herds

1960

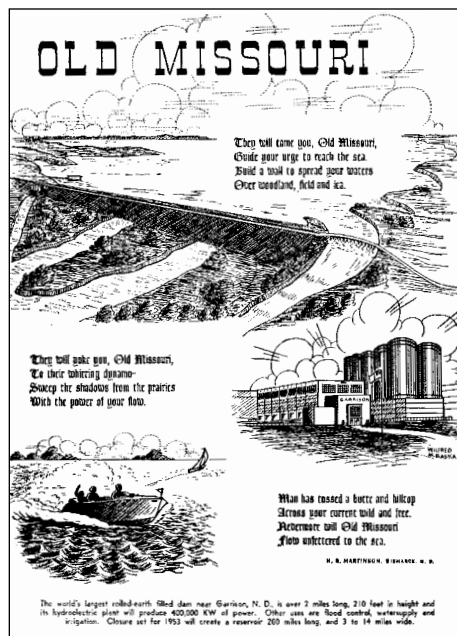
Whopper Club

Declining water levels contribute to winter-kill of game fish

Jackrabbits account for 54 percent of value of North Dakota fur harvest

Forest Service Land Utilization Projects designated as National Grasslands

Bowhunting/ trout fishing in the badlands



Garrison Dam was big news in the 1950s. This "story" appeared on the back cover of North Dakota OUTDOORS in August, 1951.



# 1961 to 1970



**1961**

Winter deer census  
Game warden duties  
Trout management  
Survey reveals North Dakota lacks appeal for tourists  
Drought and duck production in the prairies

**1962**

Economics of the fur trade in North Dakota  
Ground/air team of wardens nabs night hunters  
Second wild turkey hunting season  
Duck dilemma  
Small wetlands program

**1963**

Ice boating  
EHD virus identified as deer killer in southwest North Dakota  
Federal cost-share payments available to improve and develop wildlife habitat  
Sharptail trapping and movement study  
Wakopa Game Management Area in Turtle Mountains improved

**1964**

Computer used to issue antelope licenses  
First sage grouse season  
Wilderness Bill and Land and Water Conservation Fund Bill signed by President Johnson  
North Dakota trades pike eggs to Colorado for wild turkeys  
Buffalo moved from St. John Game Management Area to private pasture

**1965**

Top 20 winter fishing areas  
Severe December storm hard on pheasants  
Predator calling  
Waterfowl production area program  
Central Flyway wingbee

**1966**

National Rifle Association opposes proposed federal gun legislation  
March blizzard hits depleted pheasant populations  
Wetland wildlife  
Bill to ban sale of DDT introduced in Congress  
Pheasant season closed

**1967**

Progress in campaign to save endangered species  
Snakes of North Dakota  
Six whooping cranes stop in the New Leipzig area  
Effects of May Day blizzard  
Birds and their nests

**1968**

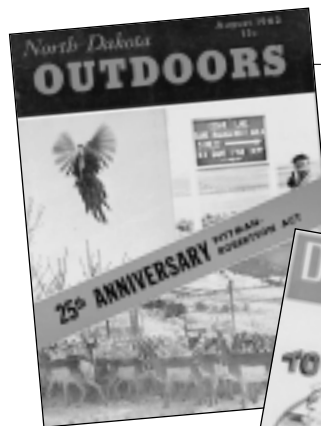
Draining and burning turns pothole land from ducks to dust  
Questionable snowmobile uses  
The Lewis and Clark Trail  
Deer hunting ethics  
Chipmunks and tree squirrels

**1969**

Wildlife use of winter food sources  
Antelope loss expected to approach 50 percent  
Canoe trip to protest dam on Sheyenne River  
Fox study  
Special early teal season

**1970**

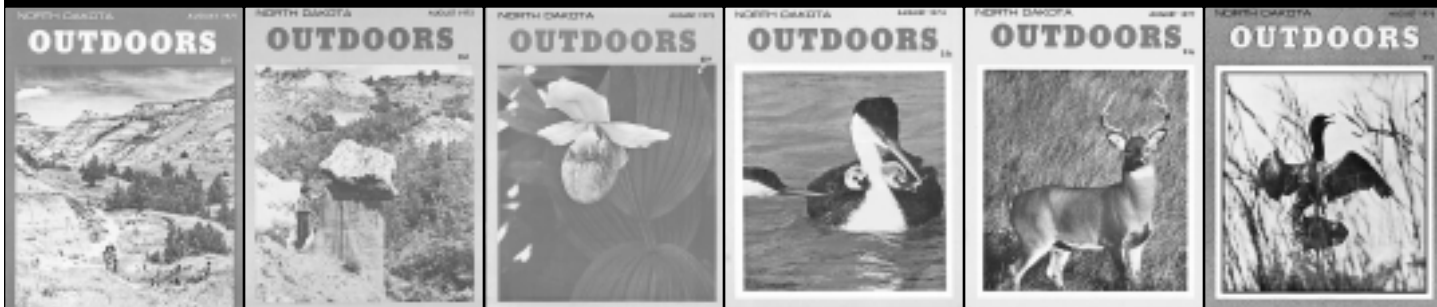
Game management areas and game production  
Prairie burning for wildlife  
Hungarian partridge food habit study  
Mourning dove banding  
Examination of Mercury in the environment



August 1962, North Dakota OUTDOORS features the 25th Anniversary of the Pittman-Robertson Act.  
Below: Dakota Sketches, featured on back covers during the '50s and '60s.



# 1971 to 1980



1971

Air pollution  
Smelt stocked in Lake Sakakawea  
Red fox and coyote in North Dakota  
Environmental ethic  
Butterfly migration research project

1972

Pembina River  
Character of hunting and fishing changing  
Federal Water Bank Program approved in 15 North Dakota counties  
Duck production up in North Dakota  
Seeds of wild plants

1973

Canada goose restoration project  
Department seeking hunter safety instructors  
Close-up views in a marsh  
Buffalo country  
Shrimp stocked in Lake Sakakawea

1974

Lead poisoning in waterfowl  
Women and gun safety  
Five hours with pelicans  
Beaver talk  
Surface mining and wildlife

1975

Poor water quality a problem for state's fisheries  
Deer blinded by blizzard  
Legislation restricts nonresident waterfowl hunters  
Series of how-to-fish articles  
First bighorn sheep season authorized

1976

Rattlesnake research  
First spring gobbler season  
Paddlefish snagging  
Badlands canoe trip  
First Governor's Walleye Cup Tournament

1977

Status of sandhill cranes in North Dakota  
Roadside management and wetland development  
Sage grouse and sage brush  
Facts from feathers  
Hunter safety-education required

1978

Winter deer management  
First moose season  
Nongame wildlife  
Bird dogs  
Night trackers

1979

Handgun hunting tips  
Hibernation strategy  
Ruffed grouse drummers  
Summer ducks  
Conservation awards

1980

Northwind decoys  
Snakes of North Dakota  
Endangered species  
Acid rain  
Predator calling



Left: Good news for waterfowl in August 1974.  
Right: A series of special issues include topics such as: endangered species, a guide to reptiles and amphibians, the Missouri River System and others are added to the magazine in the early '80s.

# 1981 to 1990



1981

Poaching  
Wildlife loss  
Lake weed control  
North Dakota's forest resources  
Pesticide contamination

1982

Musky program  
Sakakawea salmon  
Wind storm at Van Hook  
Chukars to badlands  
Wildflowers

1983

Partridge food habits  
Oil well site reclamation  
Prairie nesting hawks  
Duck recruitment studies  
100 years of fisheries management

1984

Smelt run  
Whopper Club modified  
Aspen management  
Game warden system  
First Ducks Unlimited project at  
Arena Lake

1985

Lake litter  
Commercial fisherman  
Piping plovers  
Downrigger salmon fishing  
Edible wild foods

1986

Non-toxic shot schedule  
Avian botulism  
Forest resources  
Wild side of menu  
Predator study

1987

Snakebite  
Flyfishing  
Steel shot  
Rare butterflies  
Least terns

1988

Natural areas  
Golden eagle study  
Nongame wildlife checkoff  
Setting waterfowl seasons  
Tundra swan hunting season

1989

Wildfires and wildlife  
Early days  
Enforcement activities  
Chase Lake Prairie Project  
GDU Wildlife Development Areas

1990

The devil bird  
Roadsides and wildlife  
Sauger boom  
Drought and the outdoors  
Sheep shuffle



Left: September/October 1984, magazine adds full color – inside and out.

Right: Guest artists appear on covers of special issues.





# 1991 to 2001



*1991*

Deer drawing dilemma  
Rainbows in the river  
Forgotten prairie chicken  
Waterfowl management plan  
Tribute to Ed Bry

*1992*

Ring-necked pheasants  
Antelope transplant  
Eradication/rehabilitation  
Snow geese  
Project WILD

*1993*

Fish-eating birds  
Wetlands  
Bighorn country  
Refinery geese  
Upland game identification guide

*1994*

Kids fishing  
McClusky Canal lakes  
Whooping cranes  
Night flowers  
Duck hunting primer

*1995*

Deer drawing data  
Rivers and streams  
Conservation Reserve Program  
Perch puzzle  
North Country Trail

*1996*

Sharp-shinned hawk notes  
Yellowstone River  
Devils Lake on the rise  
Snow goose problem  
Hunter ethics

*1997*

Winter wildlife losses  
Youth deer season  
Sakakawea salmon study  
Pittman-Robertson 60th anniversary  
Ice fishing

*1998*

Private Lands Program  
Conservation education  
Marsh access sites  
Electrofishing  
Pallid sturgeon recovery

*1999*

Hunter/angler expenditures  
Bicycling on the prairie  
Bluebill decline  
Maps for the hunt  
Prairie dog problems

*2000*

Missouri River biological sites  
Sport Fish Restoration  
National Grasslands fire  
Elk questions  
Hunting dog hazards

*2001*

Spring snow geese  
Bugs help reduce leafy spurge  
North American Waterfowl Management Plan  
Paddlefish radio tagging/tracking  
Seventy years of *North Dakota OUTDOORS*

